

A New Kind of Promise by Kamije Celeek

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

Pairings: Mike W./Eleven/Jane H.

Status: Completed

Published: 2019-02-10 19:39:12

Updated: 2019-02-10 19:39:12

Packaged: 2019-12-12 20:14:35

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 5,465

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Mike had a plan. Mike always has a plan. All El had to do was say yes and they could begin the rest of their lives. A new kind of promise that he was going to give her and he would never break no matter what. Because that was how Mike and Eleven worked and everyone knew it.

A New Kind of Promise

The morning of graduation dawned bright and sunny. The Hawkins High Class of '89 was ready to go out into the world and take their next steps, whatever those steps happened to be, and Mike Wheeler knew exactly what his were. Go to college, marry El Hopper, and live happily ever after. Not his best thought-out plan, but hey. He wasn't sweating the details like the fact that he was planning to marry his high school girlfriend of five years or that she wasn't going to college quite yet. No, he was concerned with what his plan was for that day because he knew nobody would like it. Especially not the Chief. Or his parents. Or maybe even his friends. Any of them would call him crazy for what he was going to do that day.

He was going to propose.

He'd bought the ring a few weeks earlier on a trip with El to Chicago to visit Kali, whose life was significantly more stable and less bloody than it had been in '84 when she and El had met each other again. It was far from the first time that he'd met her but he wasn't exactly comfortable with her. Mainly because she'd almost made El kill somebody and that left a bad taste in his mouth. El only killed to defend people she loved or if the person dying was a bad man who wanted to lock her away again.

Life was full of uncertainties, and now that everything supernatural in his life—except for one that he loved very very much—was gone, he had one complete and total certainty in his mind: he wanted to marry El Hopper. He was going to marry her. And all she had to do was say yes.

Since he was fourteen, he'd been imagining their future together and to many people, that was insane. But it made sense. She was it for him and he didn't want anybody else but her and she didn't want anybody else but him. Why not get married so the rest of their lives could start as soon as possible? El could say no if she wanted, but he wasn't going to leave her if she did. Instead, he'd try again later because it was something they both wanted.

And now, he was sitting on the stage as valedictorian, the ring in his

pocket as a speech was made to say goodbye to the graduating class. Then it was his turn to make a speech and he smiled. He wasn't going to use that to propose because that was stupid, but he still had a lot to say as a final farewell to his classmates.

"My fellow graduates, today we are moving forward with our lives and leaving high school behind us. We're all heading in different directions, like we have since we all met. Some of us are going to college, to the military, to the work force, or trying to figure out that next step to take. It's an unknown world and that can be terrifying to think about. And some of us are glad to see each other go, *Troy*." That got a laugh from the crowd and even Troy himself. "I met my best friends before high school even started, and it was in high school that I really figured out who I was. So much of me is wrapped up in my friends, my family, and the girl I love more than anything else on this planet. I know a lot of you are still searching for who you are, and I hope you find it. I guess we'll see at the ten-year reunion. So, until then, goodbye, Hawkins High."

People started clapping and cheering, even people Mike knew resented him for various reasons. El's cheeks were lightly dusted with pink as she blew him a kiss from where she was seated and he caught in his hand, resulting in 'awws!' from the crowd that made his own face turn the same shade. He could feel the weight of the ring in his pocket before he stepped off the stage and headed to his seat. So small, yet so important and he was sure El would love it once she saw it.

One by one, he heard his friends get called.

Dustin Thomas Henderson.

Jane Eleanor Hopper.

William James Hopper.

Maxine Marie Mayfield.

Lucas Henry Sinclair.

And finally...

Michael Theodore Wheeler.

He was the last in line for his class, which had irked him to no end until he made the plan to propose to El. Because being last was perfect. He wouldn't be ruining anybody's moment with his move.

Mike took the diploma from Principal Sawyer and shook her hand before turning to get his picture taken. Then he descended the staircase and walked down the aisle, but instead of returning to his seat he stopped by El. She was on the aisle, thankfully, and she gave him a look of complete and utter confusion as he reached into his pocket and sank down on one knee.

"OH MY GOD, WHEELER!" screeched Max from her seat as he opened the box. El's jaw dropped and he just grinned like the moron he was.

"Mike!" Nancy yelled next to their parents.

"El Hopper, will you marry me?" He saw tears in her eyes as she covered her mouth and nodded.

"Yes. Yes!" she squealed, throwing her arms around him and nearly knocking him over. He slid the ring on her finger and then she grabbed his face and pulled him into a kiss. Whistles and cheers went up from all over, even from her dad who he'd worried about shooting him for asking her without running it by him first.

At that moment, he felt like the luckiest son of a bitch on the planet.

"You *really* had to make it memorable, didn't you?"

Will smirked at Mike and the taller boy shrugged, still grinning like an idiot. He towered over most of them at 6'3", and especially over the 5'2" El who hadn't grown much taller since their middle-school days. She was shorter than everyone else in their group, which Mike teased her about endlessly but made for very cute moments when she levitated herself just to kiss him and shut him up.

"I'm just shocked she said yes."

"Dude, you two have been together for what, five years?" Lucas

snorted. "We all knew this is where it was going. How long were you planning that?"

"Since we went to see Kali in Chicago."

"That was six months ago." Mike shrugged again. "Jesus. How's your mom taking it?"

"She's excited because apparently Nancy isn't getting married anytime soon and she wants to be able to hold it over my aunt that her kids started getting married first."

"Michael!" called Karen excitedly. They'd all ended up back at the Wheeler house after the ceremony and Mike's extended family was there to congratulate him. Because that's what happened when somebody graduated high school, at least in *his* family.

"What's up, Mom?"

"Where's El?"

"Uh, I think she's with Max and Joyce. Why?"

"I want you two to announce the engagement together, while all your relatives are here!" She looked ecstatic and Mike sighed. But he still had a dopey smile on his face.

"I'll go find her."

"Great!"

It had been three years since Karen and Ted Wheeler had divorced, and to be honest, the household had never been happier. Ted had gone off to Chicago, where he still had to send monthly checks to supplement household funds. The fact that both Mike and Karen had jobs certainly helped, but pretty soon it was just going to be Karen and Holly living in the house. She'd been a much more attentive mom since the divorce and Mike was glad for it. That was why Karen knew the truth about El and her origins, and she was as protective of El as she was of her own kids.

"El!" he called, walking across the yard. He spotted her with Max and

one of his cousins—Richie, he realized with an internal groan.

"Hi, Mike!" El called, waving.

"Mikey! My favorite cousin!" Richie slung his arm across Mike's shoulders; they *were* the same height, after all. "How you doing? Still a nerdy fucking virgin?"

"Great to see you, too, Richie." He turned to his fiancée. "El, my mom wants to see you. Come on."

"Don't leave me with him," hissed Max, clinging to El.

"Go find Lucas. This is important."

"Right... oh, wait. Yeah. Okay. Sure."

She ran across the yard and Mike watched as Richie proceeded to bother Dustin, who looked just as annoyed.

"Oh, she's here! Great!" Karen stated, clapping her hands before turning to the yard. "Excuse me! We have a very important announcement to be made today!"

Every occupant of the yard was staring at them now, and Mike gripped El's hand comfortingly. She smiled and he faced the crowd with her by his side.

"WE'RE ENGAGED!" he announced. His grandmother let out a delighted scream as several of his other female relatives gasped. Richie let out a whoop.

"GUESS MIKEY'S NOT A VIRGIN AFTER ALL!"

"SHUT UP, RICHIE!" Dustin yelled.

Of course, Mike's family being who they were, they immediately crowded the newly-engaged couple for details of their relationship—why they were marrying so young (because they were in love and would never need to find anybody else), was El pregnant (she wasn't), how long ago they'd started having sex (fuck off, Richie). The general consensus seemed to be that their relationship was strong

enough (although Ted—ever the *helpful* father—had made a passing comment that their marriage wouldn't last through the winter. Karen and Nancy had promptly shown him the gate and he'd gone back to Chicago.)

(Thank GOD.)

"When do you want to have the wedding?"

El's question made Mike glance over at her. They were in the Wheelers' basement, El sitting in the blanket fort and Mike trying to finish up some paperwork so he could join her.

"I... I was thinking we'd just go down to the courthouse sometime this summer. What do you want?"

"Whatever you want is fine with me, but I don't think your mom will see it the same way."

"Shit."

"I mean, I kind of wanted a ceremony with the white dress and flowers and everything, but—"

"Wait. I have an idea."

"Shoot."

"What if we do the courthouse wedding and then I go off to college, and when I come back, we have the big fancy wedding next summer?" He went to join her in the blanket fort and she nodded.

"That way, we both get what we want and your mom can help me plan the wedding while you're gone."

"Great." He kissed her gently and she leaned into it, rolling his bottom lip between her teeth and making him groan. "Fuck, El..."

"MIKEY! ELLIE!"

"Dammit."

Holly came running down the stairs and launched herself into the fort, landing between the couple. Her face was lit up.

"Can I be the flower girl in your wedding? Mom said I had to ask first."

"Yeah," Mike sighed, running a hand through his hair.

"Hey, you two were being gross. I stopped it."

"That you did. And El and I aren't having a wedding like that until next summer."

"That's a whole *year* away!"

"Well, that gives us plenty of time to plan," El pointed out. "And I'm staying home this year, so I'll probably be around here a lot more. You can help me out if you want."

Holly's face lit up and she giggled, hugging El and then falling onto the blankets.

"How long has this been up?" she asked. "I don't think I've ever come down here without seeing it."

"It's been up since you were a baby, Baby Holly," Mike replied. "I put it up when you were three and it hasn't come down once—other than that one time I was super pissed at myself and took it out on the fort."

"Why were you mad?"

"I did something stupid and I almost lost El because of it. I yelled at her."

"Wait. Wait. You actually got *mad at El* once?"

"Twice. In the same week," El corrected softly. "He yelled at me twice."

"Jeez. And you forgave him?"

"He was one of the first people who was ever nice to me. And I'd

already started falling for him by that point."

"Was that the week Will went missing? And there was that thing in Mrs. Byers's walls?" Mike blinked; while Karen was aware of El's history and of the Upside-Down, he had made a point not to tell Holly until she was old enough to understand.

"What? How do you—"

"I remember a little bit of that week. You kept stuffing food in your pockets and there was one night where you spit milk at the dinner table and it got all over your lap." El started giggling and Mike turned pink. "But the big thing I remember is going over to the Byers with Mom because she was bringing Mrs. Byers a casserole. The lights in the hall started flickering so I followed it down to Will's room."

"Holly, that was—"

"Stupid?"

"Yeah, kinda. But you were little, so I can forgive it."

"Anyway, the lights in his room started flashing like crazy and then they stopped and this thing started trying to get out of the wall. The wall was all stretchy like gum, too, but the thing was gone when Mrs. Byers came to get me."

Mike let out a sigh and rubbed his eye.

"That thing took Will, didn't it?"

"Yeah. Yeah, it did. But El killed it."

Holly's eyes widened and Mike knew it was time to tell his sister the truth.

El felt a little overwhelmed as Mike parked his car off Denfield. Her 'wedding dress' (really just a strapless pale pink dress that Nancy had helped her find) was suddenly the most interesting thing because she and Mike were alone. They were alone and *married* and heading to the cabin where she'd spent two years hiding from the government.

Hopper had handed her the keys as a wedding present and warned her to not go too crazy with the decorating.

Now they were walking through the woods, her flats not exactly suited for the task but she managed anyway. Mike had his hand in hers, rubbing his thumb over the engagement ring and the wedding band that had joined it a few hours earlier. It didn't feel quite real yet, like they were still two dumb high-schoolers sneaking off to fool around in the woods and praying their respective parents didn't check their rooms.

"Happy wedding day, El Wheeler."

"Same to you." The cabin came into view and Mike stopped suddenly. They were only about fifty feet away.

"Ready, love?"

"Ready? Ready for wh—*Mike!*"

In one quick motion, he scooped her into his arms and carried her the last fifty feet. She unlocked and opened the door with her powers to make it slightly easier for him, which he did appreciate before kicking the door closed behind him and setting down his wife. She was giggling like a madwoman and he loved the sound as he pulled her close into a kiss.

"I love you," he whispered, pressing his forehead to hers.

"I love you, too."

Just like in the basement a couple weeks earlier, she rolled his bottom lip in between her teeth as they kissed and he let out a groan as he pulled her towards the bedroom.

They only had two months until Mike left, after all.

Once Mike was off at school and El was left in Hawkins, she all but moved into the Wheeler house. Karen was insistent that El stay with them for as long as possible so she wouldn't be alone while Mike was gone, but her mother-in-law was also insistent on turning the cabin

into a real house for Mike to come home to. And between the flurry of wedding planning (outdoor ceremony with a reception at the Wheeler house) and getting the cabin ready, El felt like her life was settling into a comfortable place. Mike helped with wedding planning whenever he came home, but for the most part, it was El, Joyce, and Karen doing the work. None of them minded.

"We need to get you a dress," Karen stated, running a hand through El's curls. "I'd offer mine, but we're nowhere near the same size."

"Mine when I was your age wasn't much of a wedding dress," Joyce admitted. "I didn't get a big wedding until I married Hop."

"I think it was a beautiful dress," El told her stepmother softly.

That was what led to Max and Nancy getting roped into everything while they were home for Spring Break. They ended up going dress shopping with El and the two mothers because... well... they were El's bridesmaids. Nancy was happy to help with a wedding that wasn't her own—still a sore subject between her and Karen because Jonathan hadn't asked yet—and Max took the opportunity to torture Mike with insinuations that El's dress was going to drive him insane when he saw her in it.

And once summer arrived, so did Mike's relatives. That was standard; when someone got married, all the long-distant relatives showed up to either disapprove or for the free cake. Kali and her gang had been invited, too, and Mike was meeting Axel, Mick, Funshine, and Dottie for the first time. They seemed incredibly protective of El and he could remember how just a few years earlier, they'd been helping Kali track down the bad men that had hurt his wife. Becky and Terry came, too, and El seemed touched that her invitation had been accepted by her birth mother and her aunt.

The day of the wedding dawned much like the day of their graduation: bright and sunny, with not a cloud in sight and Mike finding himself being shaken awake by Richie. He wasn't happy with that, until Richie gave him a not-so-gentle (and explicit) reminder that he was marrying the love of his life and needed to get his lanky ass out of bed and get ready because if he didn't, Karen Wheeler would be storming up there to get him and it wouldn't be pretty.

"I'm already *married* to her," Mike grumbled.

"Yeah, but that was a quick thing with just you, her, and a minister. Now it's in front of your families and you have to live with the knowledge that we all know you're screwing her in every possible way. And I mean—"

"Richie, shut up."

Mike got ready to go and found himself being poked and prodded by his mother as she fussed over his hair.

"Mom!"

"You need to figure out how to make it lie better," she chided. "Oh, I hope it looks okay in the pictures..."

"It'll be fine!"

"I'm just saying, you only seem to be able to take a decent photo when El's in the frame with you! Hopefully, that stays true today!"

"I'm already *married* to her. Bad photos aren't going to change that—"

"But I want them to look nice. After all, these are some of the photos I'll be showing your children."

Mike, who'd been taking a sip of water while his mother ranted, choked on the liquid at the mention of kids. Richie started snickering and Mike shot him a glare.

It wasn't like he and El weren't planning on having kids; it was... they'd never really discussed it, only accepting it as an eventuality. But having his mother remind him of that fact was unexpected and jarring. On the other hand, he was sure he didn't want kids quite yet. If El came forward and told him she was pregnant, though, he'd be happy and terrified at the same time.

Even the ride to the ceremony was a lot of Dustin and Lucas teasing him, even though it was his and El's first anniversary as a married couple and the big wedding was just for show. His stomach was twisting at the thought of the vows he'd written—ones that he felt

like needed to be said outside of the standard—and proclaiming his love for El in front of their extended families. He'd been doing it since he was fourteen, but never in front of an audience that had their eyes on him and her. He was privately hoping that somebody would do something stupid, like turn up drunk halfway through the ceremony.

But everything was going perfectly. His relatives were sitting down, Kali's gang had dressed up for once (El had told him they were people who exclusively dressed like badasses because that's what they were and they'd dressed her like that too), and he could see his dad staring at him with disapproval from the crowd. But Mike didn't give a fuck what Ted Wheeler thought. All that mattered was—for the second time—marrying the love of his life. And then Nancy, Kali, and Max came down the aisle as El's bridesmaids, and then came Holly with the basket of petals, and then...

Holy. Fucking. Shit.

He thought she'd looked pretty in his sister's old pink dress when he, Dustin, and Lucas had disguised her back in '83. She'd been beautiful at the Snow Ball in '84 and at Homecoming and prom in high school. El had been drop-dead gorgeous on their first wedding day, a year before. And now... Mike's articulate brain couldn't find a word to describe how she looked. All of the adjectives he'd used in his life to compliment her suddenly flew out the window and he couldn't take his eyes off her as Hopper walked with her down the aisle.

"Breathe, Mike," whispered Will, ever the loyal best man/brother-in-law.

He inhaled and El and Hopper reached them, Hopper making a show of putting El's hand in Mike's before leaning over to whisper something.

"You hurt her and I have a rifle with your name on it."

A familiar threat, one that Mike had been hearing since he and El became official years ago. Back when she'd just started being allowed out in public on a regular basis and they were enjoying one last summer before high school. And it was back then that Mike had started saving for a ring. He'd known then that this was where he and

El would end up and he didn't regret it. Not when he was where he was now. Not when he had the most perfect person in the history of the universe as his wife. A psychokinetic, telepathic badass who also happened to be smart and beautiful and *God*, he was lucky. Nobody else knew what it was like to be with El because neither of them had *been with* anybody else, and that was the way it was going to stay.

And the next thing he knew, it was his turn to say his vows.

"El, we've been together for six years now—five dating and one married. Today is our wedding anniversary as well as our wedding, and as good as I am with words, I don't think I'll ever be able to find the right ones to express how grateful I am to have you and having found you. You are the strongest, smartest, most beautiful person in the world, and I am *lucky* to even know you. I don't know how or why you fell for me. Most girls would've run for the hills, but you didn't. And even though our first year of marriage was mostly spent apart, I treasured every moment we were together. Because when I'm not with you, something is missing in my life and you make me feel whole. I love you more than anything else in the universe and that's the honest truth. I don't think it's possible for me to love you any more than I already do. And I'm happy to marry you all over again, *El Wheeler*."

He heard a loud sniff and could see Richie dabbing at his eyes in the crowd. And his annoying cousin wasn't alone; quite a few people were teary-eyed after his speech. And now it was El's turn.

"Mike. For twelve years, I didn't have a real home or a real family. I didn't know what it was like to have someone actually care about me. And then... then I met you, and you gave me all of that. You even gave me a real name that I could call my own. It's because of you that I'm the person I am today. I'm nowhere near as good with words as you are, so if you can't put your love for me into words, I definitely can't. But even then, you are the greatest person I know. I love everything about you, from your freckles to the way your hair gets curly in the morning and how you can't really dance but you try anyway to make me happy. And some people say we're still too young to know what love is, but to me... I've known what it is since we were kids who were scared to even kiss each other with other people around. Here we are now, about to do it in front of an

audience, and I'm just as happy to marry you again."

Once again, it seemed like there weren't a lot of dry eyes in the crowd. Even the minister had to wipe an eye before regaining his composure. Mike and El each put on a second wedding band (because that was a thing that needed to happen, *Steve*) and Mike didn't even wait for the minister to give him the cue before he leaned down and kissed El. Cheers went up and whistles came from Richie and Max before Nancy silenced both of them with a silent glare.

At the reception, a variety of music was played for people to dance to while eating delicious food courtesy of Karen Wheeler. Mike found himself being congratulated by his relatives while his wife stood next to him with her hand tightly clasped in his. It was a beautiful feeling to have and he couldn't believe that he was so lucky as to have married her. Twice. Within a year.

Their 'first dance' as a married couple was to the same song as their first dance had been as a couple in general—'Every Breath You Take'. Max had mocked them mercilessly for this choice until Lucas had given her a not-so-gentle reminder that she'd kissed him for the first time to the same song, which had shut her up easily. Mike's dancing had improved—at least in the slow variety—thanks to help from Nancy and El alike, and no longer were he and El doing the awkward middle-school slow-dance shuffle that they'd started out with back in '84, during that first school dance. The mother-son dance and the father-daughter dance were slightly awkward but they got through it and proceeded to other wedding traditions, like smashing cake into each other's faces.

The bouquet toss ended with Max catching it and blushing furiously. Lucas had smirked at her and she'd said, "If you think you're proposing to me right now, I'll pound you into the ground, Sinclair."

Then came the garter toss, which proved to be... interesting. Mike had to dive under El's skirt to get said article—right in front of her very intimidating family (Joyce Byers was undoubtedly intimidating when she wanted to be)—and he'd teased her a bit, making her squeal, before pulling it off her leg. It had landed in Dustin's outstretched hands and he'd started sputtering in complete and utter shock over that turn of events before completely accepting that

despite being the only member of the Party who was still single, he was likely going to end up married at some point soon.

Then finally, finally, Mike and El were allowed to leave on their own... after Jonathan took eight billion pictures of them together at various points. They retreated to the cabin, where Mike once again carried her across the threshold but this time carried her all the way to the bedroom and laid her on their bed. Instead of immediately proceeding to 'consummation', as his great-aunt had put it, he laid there next to her and smiled.

"I'm so fucking lucky to have you," he whispered, brushing a lock of hair behind her ear.

"I'm lucky you found me in the rain and took me home." She reached out with her left hand to touch his face and he noticed her tattoo was different.

The 011 had been transformed into the word PROMISE and his heart swelled.

It was her favorite word, the one she always associated with him and one of the first words he'd taught her. And she'd turned the brand of the lab into a symbol of them. He had no idea when it had happened, but chances were she'd just gone out and done it within the last couple of weeks. After all, Nancy seemed particularly interested in keeping him and El from being alone together during that time and her knowing about the tattoo change made sense.

"God, I love you." He caught her lips in a kiss and she wrapped her arms around him, shutting the bedroom door with her mind and locking it.

Through every bit of trouble, right-side up or upside-down, domestic or supernatural, human- or demon-based, they'd been together. They were each other's support—emotional, physical, and mental. There was only one Mike and El, and that was the way it needed to be. They only needed each other.

But... somebody else would need them, too, and they'd be coming soon.

God, this was a long one. Most of this was actually written in a single day, with the actual wedding being written within the past six hours of me writing this author's note.

And no, it's not unrealistic for two people to get married twice within a year to the same people. Why am I defensive? Because that was my parents' story, although a little less romantic than Mike and El's because my mom was in her late twenties and my dad was in his early thirties when they did the courthouse wedding on their way to a football game and my mom was pregnant with me at the time. They had the big family wedding a year later with me being there, even though I don't remember it because DUH, I was nine months old at the time.

Lots of really nice pictures, though.

This entire story stemmed from me having the image of Mike proposing to El at graduation and I just ran with it because WHY NOT.

Also high-key on the Ted-hate Wheeler-divorce Karen-knows Will/Jonathan-becoming-Hoppers train. ALL ABOARD, MOTHERFUCKERS.

Also also, Richie Tozier because why not.

I'm planning to do another one-shot for this involving an OC of mine who hasn't popped up in ANY of my Stranger Things fics yet. And there's a reason, but I'm keeping their identity a secret for now. Even if I teased them a bit right there at the end. You'll likely see them within a fic or two...

So long and thanks for all the fish!